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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/538,541	01/13/2006	Christian Roth-Schuler	05-372	3690
34704 7590 06/25/2008 BACHMAN & LAPOINTE, P.C. 900 CHAPEL STREET SUITE 1201 NEW HAVEN, CT 06510				
EXAMINER				
STABLEY, MICHAEL R				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3611				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/25/2008		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/538,541

**Applicant(s)**

ROTH-SCHULER ET AL.

**Examiner**

Michael R. Stabley

**Art Unit**

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 April 2008.  
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 6-12 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 6-12 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10 June 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/CDC)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 6 and 8 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Andersson (WO 01/34454 A1).

In re claim 6, Andersson discloses a semi trailer coupling as shown in Figure 1 comprising a coupling plate (4) and a bearing block for movable fastening of the coupling plate to a frame (2) of a tractor, the bearing block includes a bearing region (10) and a fastening region (8), the bearing region includes bearing means for pivotable bearing of the coupling plate about axis (y) and the fastening region includes fastening means for detachable fastening of the coupling plate to the frame of the tractor, wherein the bearing region has a larger cross section than that the fastening region (as shown in Figure 4), when the bearing block is screwed on section in the direction of travel and parallel to pivoting axis.

In re claim 8, Andersson discloses the semi trailer coupling as claimed in claim 6, wherein the bearing block is formed from a one-piece casting as shown in Figure 3.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 7, 9-12 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andersson as applied to claim 6 above, and further in view of Alguera Gallego (US Patent 6,623,024).

In re claim 7, Andersson discloses the semi trailer coupling as claimed in claim 6, but does not disclose that the bearing region of the bearing block defines with the coupling plate on a clearance for relative movements of the coupling plate and the bearing block. Alguera Gallego, however, does disclose that the bearing region of the bearing block (5) defines with the coupling plate (1a) on a clearance for relative movements of the coupling plate and the bearing block in a direction perpendicular to the direction of travel and in the direction of the pivoting axis as shown in Figure 7. At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Andersson to have the fastening region of Alguera Gallego since the two fastening regions would perform equally well at securing the coupling plate to a trailer frame and is thus a mere substitution of one fastening region for another.

In re claims 9 and 10, the combination of Andersson and Alguera Gallego disclose the semi trailer coupling as claimed above in claims 6 and 7. Alguera Gallego also discloses that the bearing block has a width in the direction of the pivoting axis in the bearing region which is smaller than the width of a receiving region on the coupling plate for receiving the bearing block as shown in Figure 7.

In re claims 11 and 12, the combination of Andersson and Alguera Gallego disclose the semi trailer coupling as claimed above in claims 9 and 10. Andersson further discloses that the width of the bearing region is roughly 2.5 times the width of the fastening region of the bearing block as shown Figure 4. It has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to have chosen the appropriate width based upon the desired results.

### ***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments filed 4/30/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that the prior art does not teach a clearance to compensate for movement in the direction of the pivoting axis. However, the examiner maintains that the rejection is proper as discussed above. Gallego teaches a clearance as shown in Figure 7 between elements 1a and 17, which creates a gap for movement in the pivoting axis as discussed above with regards to claim 7.

### ***Conclusion***

2. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Stabley whose telephone number is 571-270-3249. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley D. Morris can be reached on 571-272-6651. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Michael Stabley

Art Unit: 3611

Examiner  
Art Unit 3611

/Michael R Stabley/  
Examiner, Art Unit 3611

/Lesley D. Morris/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3611